

02 March 2010

Prime Minister  
Premier of Queensland  
National memorial service held for AHS Centaur  
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A national service to remember the 332 victims and survivors of the sinking of the Australian Hospital Ship *Centaur* was held in Brisbane today.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd joined Premier Anna Bligh, Governor General Quentin Bryce, military officials, survivors, relatives of survivors and victims and members of the public at St John's Cathedral for the moving memorial service.

"Today we honour all those who lost their lives on the Australian Hospital Ship *Centaur*," Mr Rudd said.

"We also honour the families who then waited two-thirds of a century to discover the final resting place of their loved ones.

"Its wreck is now an eternal reminder of all those onboard and their commitment to this nation in a time of great need.

"This is an important day for all Australians to stop and remember those brave souls who lost their lives that day. They will never be forgotten."

"The AHS *Centaur* was sunk without warning by a torpedo from a Japanese submarine on 14 May 1943, about 50 miles east north-east of Brisbane," Ms Bligh said.

"The 66 year mystery surrounding its final resting place was solved late last year with the discovery of the ship's wreck off the Queensland coast on 20 December.

"That discovery and today's memorial service will hopefully offer some peace to those affected by the tragedy.

"It's important we honour and remember the 268 people who died in the service of their country and acknowledge the devastating effect this has had on their families," Ms Bligh said.

87-year-old *Centaur* survivor Martin Pash spoke at today's service and students from Centaur Primary School read out the names of the 268 men and women killed.

A commemorative plaque was placed on fore deck of the wreck of the *Centaur* on 12 January 2010.

Created by The Centaur Association, the plaque contains a CD with the names of everyone who served on the *Centaur* and personal notes from family members.

The AHS *Centaur* has been declared an historic shipwreck under the Act, meaning that the vessel should not be interfered with in any way.

The Australian and Queensland governments jointly committed \$4 million to the search guided by David Mearns from Bluewater Recoveries.

Today's national memorial service was the first of two commemorations.

A further 'at sea' ceremony is also being organised for later in the year.

The wreck location is approximately 30 miles due east of the southern tip of Moreton Island (27 deg 16.98' South, 153 deg 59.22' East) at a depth of 2,059 metres.